

Cockroaches have been around millions of years. They are considered to be a pest or nuisance, annoying many homeowners. Although cockroaches can carry disease-causing organisms, they are not usually associated with illness or disease outbreaks.

There are several problems associated with cockroaches. Cockroaches can:

- Contaminate food and other items with excrement and bacteria.
- Produce secretions which affect the flavor of food.
- Produce allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

General Characteristics

Cockroaches are oval and flat-bodied which enables them to squeeze into small places. They are most active at night and hide in dark cracks and crevices during the day. They usually hide in areas close to moisture and food such as kitchens. Cockroaches like to feed on a variety of materials including starchy or sweet substances, and meat products.

If cockroaches are seen during the daytime, there is probably a large infestation.

Most cockroaches have wings but do not fly. They are carried from place to place in groceries, packages, furniture and other items. They can also gain access to homes through openings around utility pipes and under doors.



Types of Cockroaches

Cockroaches have three different life stages: egg, nymph and adult. Females produce egg capsules which they either drop, attach to a surface, or carry around until hatched. Nymphs hatch out of the egg capsule and resemble small adults without wings and may be a different color. Nymphs undergo several changes, or moltings, to become adults.

There are many different types of cockroaches in the United States. Each has its own habits.

German Cockroaches are the most common household roach in the U.S. They are long, slender, and pale brown or tan with two dark markings on the back of their head. Adults are around 1/2" in length with long wings. They live in cupboards and in insulation of refrigerators or stoves. They eat a variety of foods, but prefer fermented foods.

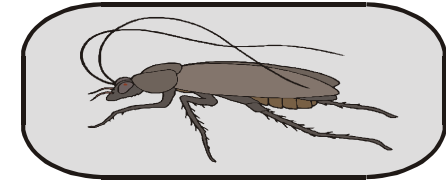
Oriental Cockroaches are dark reddish-brown to shiny black and about 1" long. Males have short wings. They live near sinks, dishwashers, and other damp places and feed on decaying organic matter such as garbage.

American Cockroaches are reddish-brown and grow to 1 1/2" or more. They live in warm, moist environments around bathtubs, drains, basements and garages and are often found outdoors. They feed on a variety of foods.

Brown Banded Cockroaches are light brown with two light bands across the base of the wings and abdomen. They are rarely more than 1/2" long, and are usually found on ceilings, walls, or behind pictures. Their favorite food seems to be starchy materials.

Cockroach Control

Cockroaches require food, moisture, and warmth or shelter to thrive. Proper control starts with eliminating these conditions. Follow good sanitation practices to keep roaches from establishing.



Removing food sources is very important. Roaches are attracted to meat, meat products, sweet, sugary or starchy foods, garbage or other decaying matter, and starchy materials such as book bindings, wallpaper or stamps.

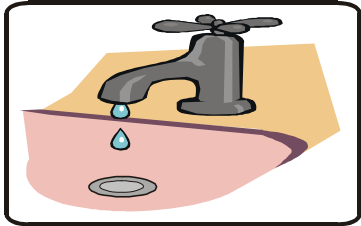
To remove food sources:

- Keep food products in covered impervious containers.
- Clean up food particles on shelves and floors.
- Wash dishes immediately after a meal.
- Clean under appliances, sinks, and furniture.
- Keep garbage containers sealed with lids and remove garbage often.
- Do not leave pet foods out.

Another important control measure is to eliminate water sources.

To remove water sources:

- Repair dripping faucets and leaking pipes.
- Screen sewer, drain, and other openings.
- Caulk around tubs and showers.



Shelter areas also need to be eliminated to control cockroaches. **To remove shelter areas and exclude cockroaches from a home:**

- Do not accumulate boxes, magazines, newspapers, or piles of paper.
- Fill cracks and crevices in walls, baseboards, etc.
- Install tight fitting doors with door sweeps.

To clean up roach infested areas thoroughly clean and vacuum the house and infested areas. Remove vacuum cleaner bag immediately, place in a plastic bag, seal tightly and dispose of in an outdoor garbage can.

Insecticide Use

Insecticides may be used to reinforce sanitation controls, but will have little or no effect if not preceded by clean up efforts. Use insecticides as a last measure for cockroach control.

Insecticides can be highly toxic. It is recommended that a licensed pest control operator be contracted to apply insecticides.

Follow these precautions when applying or storing insecticides:

- Read the label and follow directions.
- Use the chemical only for the stated purpose.
- Chemicals used in food service areas must be approved for such use.
- Handle chemicals with care, and store out of reach of children.

Insecticides are not very effective unless directed into the cracks and crevices where the roaches hide during the day. It is essential to first thoroughly clean the area and then spray or dust properly.

To control cockroaches in an apartment, it is usually necessary for all units in the building to be treated.

For more information contact:

Benton-Franklin Health District,
Environmental Health Division
800 W. Canal Drive
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509)582-7761 Ext. 246
Website: www.bfhd.wa.gov

Tips For Cockroach Control

